

In the Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for protecting meat products, comprising:

applying at least one of: hop extract, hydrogenated hop extract, hop alpha acids, hop beta acids, hydrogenated hop acids and derivatives of hop acids and their resins, without additional antimicrobial agents other than plant extracts; on an inside surface of a cellulosic casing used in sausage production to prevent an appearance and growth of gram-positive bacteria in said meat products, wherein the meat product contains 50 to 500 ppm of at least one of the following: hop extract, hydrogenated hop extract, hop alpha acids, hop beta acids, hydrogenated hop acids and derivatives of hop acids or their resins.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the application is performed in concentrations so as to prevent the appearance and growth of bacteria of the genus *Listeria* in these meat products.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A cellulosic casing for meat products, comprising:
an internal coating comprising a solution that contains at least one of the following: hop extract, hydrogenated hop extract, hop alpha acids, hop beta acids, hydrogenated hop acids and derivatives of hop acids or their resins;
the solution comprising no additional antimicrobial agents other than plant extracts;

wherein the meat product contains 50 to 500 ppm of at least one of the following: hop extract, hydrogenated hop extract, hop alpha acids, hop beta acids, hydrogenated hop acids and derivatives of hop acids or their resins.

Claim 4 (previously presented): A meat product, comprising:
a cellulosic casing for meat products, comprising:
an internal coating comprising a solution that contains at least one of the following: hop extract, hydrogenated hop extract, hop alpha acids, hop beta acids, hydrogenated hop acids and derivatives of hop acids or their resins;

the solution comprising no additional antimicrobial agents other than plant extracts;

wherein the meat product contains 50 to 100 ppm of at least one of the following: hop extract, hydrogenated hop extract, hop alpha acids, hop beta acids, hydrogenated hop acids and derivatives of hop acids or their resins.

Claim 5 (canceled).

Claim 6 (canceled).

Claim 7 (previously presented): The meat product according to claim 4 comprising any meat composition, which may or may not have been submitted to an additional smoking process.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A method for applying a solution to a meat product, comprising

a) producing a solution containing at least one of the following components:

hop extract, hydrogenated hop extract, hop alpha acids, hop beta acids, hydrogenated hop acids and derivatives of hop acids or their resins, which does not contain additional antimicrobial agents other than plant extracts;

b) applying the solution to an inside of a cellulosic casing;

c) filling the cellulosic casing with meat paste that is the meat product; and

d) heating the meat product so that the solution is transferred to the meat surface;

wherein the meat product contains 50 to 500 ppm of at least one of the following: hop extract, hydrogenated hop extract, hop alpha acids, hop beta acids, hydrogenated hop acids and derivatives of hop acids or their resins.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method according to claim 8, further comprising removing the cellulosic casing of the meat product.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method according to claim 8, wherein in step d) further comprises smoking the meat product.